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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - JUNE 13, 2008

11. (U) IN ABSENTIA WAR CRIMES CONVICTION "UPHELD":
This week the Split County Court sentenced former Serb police commander Mitar Arambasic to 20 years imprisonment for war crimes. Arambasic, who was extradited from the U.S. in 2006, was retried by the same judge who had convicted him in absentia (along with 38 others) in 1997. Arambasic was found guilty of committing crimes against Croatian prisoners while serving as police commander in the village of Otisic, near Knin, between 1991 and 1995. Announcing its verdict, the Court indicated that it "upheld" the prior charges and 20 year sentence - the maximum under the law. The judge explained that since a verdict had previously been reached the burden of proof was on the defendant, requiring him to present evidence to establish his innocence. While a written verdict has not yet been issued, OSCE monitors are concerned that the Court's explanation calls into question an individual's right to a retrial following an in absentia conviction and his right to a fair trial. Arambasic reportedly emigrated to the U.S. in 2000 and was detained in South Dakota two years later. In January 2006, he was extradited to Croatia where he had been awaiting a re-trial since March 2007. (KSelinger)

12. (SBU) U.S. RADAR EXPERTS EVALUATE CROATIAN SYSTEM:
At the invitation of the Croatian Navy, U.S. Navy Europe sent a team of three U.S. Navy radar experts to visit Croatian Navy headquarters in Split, and the coastal surveillance radar station on Lastovo Island, for the purpose of evaluating the Croatian Navy's Enhanced Peregrine radar system. Escorted by the Embassy's Naval Attache, the team visited Croatia from 9 through 12 June, 2008. They evaluated the Enhanced Peregrine radar system, which has been problematic since its original installation by a U.S. contractor, examining the Croatian Navy's operation and maintenance of the system, and the system's current status relative to specifications taken from the system technical manuals. The team provided initial feedback to Croatian Navy leadership and will follow-up with a detailed written evaluation. The initial feedback included recommendations for immediate operational and maintenance procedural changes that should lead to improved radar system reliability. (BMosenfelder)

13. (U) CROATIA HOSTS UNSCR 1540 WORKSHOP:
Croatia, in partnership with the government of Romania and NATO, hosted the "UNSCR 1540 - A Path for Further Implementation" workshop at RACVIAC 5-6 June 2008. Participants shared their thoughts on the roles and responsibilities of individual states and international organizations in implementing efforts to combat proliferation of weapons of mass destruction outlined in UNSCR 1540, emphasizing national responsibility. Much of the discussion focused on best practices in the areas of implementation planning, legal frameworks, and export and border controls.

William Puttmann, from NATO's WMD Center, shared his thoughts on NATO's role in supporting UNSCR 1540, while representatives from the U.S. Department of State discussed coordinating inter-agency assistance programs and USG technical assistance relative to UNSCR 1540. The workshop drew representatives from a variety of countries and international organizations including Croatia, Romania, Turkey, France, Bulgaria, Norway, Greece, Serbia, Czech Republic, Macedonia, the IAEA and the UN. (CRhoton)

¶4. (U) NATO REPRESENTATIVES VISIT CROATIA:

On June 6, Ministry of Foreign Affairs State Secretary Bianca Matkovic, who also heads Croatia's delegation in NATO accession negotiations, received representatives of the NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council team visiting Croatia. The meeting was held as part of preparing the timetable of reforms that the country will undergo during its accession to NATO. Matkovic mentioned Croatia's efforts in reforming the judiciary, fighting corruption and providing housing for returning refugees. In the meeting, it was confirmed that the Protocol on Croatia's accession to NATO would be signed by the North Atlantic Council on July 9,

¶2008. (ZTomic)

Bradtke